

REMARKS

14

OF

James

1798 - 1864

MR. SEMPLE, OF ILLINOIS,

ON THE

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY HIM RELATIVE TO THE OCCUPATION OF THE OREGON TERRITORY.

DELIVERED

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 25, 1844.

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REMARKS.

On the 8th of January, 1844, Mr. SEMPLE introduced the following Resolution :

"*Resolved*, That the President of the United States be requested to give notice to the British Government that it is the desire of the Government of the United States to annul and abrogate the provisions of the Third Article of the Convention concluded between the Government of the United States of America and His Britannic Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, on the 20th of October, 1818, and indefinitely continued by the Convention between the same parties, signed at London, the 6th of August, 1827."

On the 25th of January, the resolution was called up for consideration, when Mr. ARCHER, of Virginia, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, moved to have it referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. SEMPLE said—

MR. PRESIDENT : I did not suppose, after the delay which has already attended the consideration of the resolution which I had the honor to introduce, that there would be any desire for a further postponement. I had, at first, no disposition to urge a hasty decision of the question, and therefore, with great pleasure, yielded to the suggestion of my friends to give time for reflection. I was fully aware that it was a question of great importance, and I myself wished that every Senator should have ample time to examine the subject in all its bearings. I think sufficient time has been given, and I cannot consent to a longer delay.

The object of a reference to a committee is generally for the purpose of inquiry and examination, with a view to prepare and digest a complicated subject for the action of the Senate. If such inquiry and examination were necessary in this case, I should have no objection to a reference; but so far from this, it has been avowed by the honorable Senator from Virginia [Mr. ARCHER] that the object of the reference is delay. He does not wish to take any step whatever in relation to this subject, until after we have seen the result of negotiations which, he informs us, are in prospect. He is not willing to interfere with the President in these negotiations.

Now, sir, in the first place, I do not believe that the passage of this resolution will have any injurious effect upon any negotiation which may

take place between the two countries. The very fact of commencing a negotiation presupposes that the parties are not satisfied with existing treaties. Can there be anything disrespectful to inform a friendly nation that we are not satisfied with an existing treaty, and propose to make a new one? Certainly not. This is the first step in making all treaties whatever. The resolution under consideration is nothing more than this. When we shall have given notice that we desire to terminate the present treaty, we are then better prepared to make or to receive propositions for a new one.

In the present state of the case, the British Government is well enough satisfied with the present treaty: we are not. Can any one suppose that, while the treaty with which the British Government is satisfied exists, there is the least prospect that a new one will be made? He who supposes so cannot be well acquainted with the character of the British Government. But if we abrogate this treaty, and take exclusive possession of the territory, then there will be some inducement for both parties to come to some understanding. But how is it possible that there can be any disrespect shown by giving the notice, and abrogating this treaty? The treaty itself provides for its own dissolution; the British Government has already agreed that we may abrogate it whenever we please. How, then, can the Senator from Virginia suppose for a moment that we can give offence, or be looked on as standing in a hostile attitude, by doing that which we have a right to do by solemn compact—by the treaty itself? But, sir, the Senator from Virginia is opposed to interfering with the President in any new negotiations which may be in prospect. My opinion is just the reverse: I am in favor of expressing an opinion in advance. I wish to indicate now to the President that we cannot agree to any treaty which shall provide for a joint occupation, or which shall allow any other nation to have any jurisdiction or control whatever over the soil of the Oregon. Are we to sit here with our arms folded, and wait until a treaty is made, and then reject it? Have we no power, or no right, to advise the President what course, in our opinion, should be pursued? I think this is the best mode of treating on any subject. The President himself should ask the advice of the Senate before a treaty is concluded. The Senate should advise first, and after it is signed, then consent to the treaty. Advice and consent are both necessary on the part of the Senate. In this case, I am not sure that our advice is, or will be, obligatory on the President. He may or may not give the notice, even should this resolution pass; but it will be a strong indication, and will scarcely be entirely neglected by the President. We have the right, however, to act on the subject, whether our action is regarded or disregarded. We have recently, I think, entertained a similar resolution—I mean that introduced by the honorable Senator from Ohio [Mr. ALLEN]—and I am persuaded that if that resolution had been in Executive session, it would have passed the Senate. I have another reason for passing this resolution. I have not the most unlimited confidence in negotiations, as the best mode of securing our rights; we have frequently been outrageously cheated in negotiations. We have surrendered our territory by negotiations in the Southwest and in the West, with regard to our line with Mexico. All the country watered by the Rio del Norte was ours before we surrendered it; and the thirty-fourth degree of North latitude

to the Pacific ocean should have been our boundary with Mexico. We have surrendered territory in the Northeast, and in the North, to Great Britain ; and, sir, I want to see no more surrendered. For this reason I am a little afraid of negotiations, and I am not willing to let any other go on to a final termination without first giving some opinion as to what should be done, or, in other words, *advising* the President what to do.

Had the honorable Senator from Virginia [Mr. ARCHER] not made this motion to refer the resolution, with the avowed object of delay, I should not have said anything on the subject ; and it is not my intention at present to occupy the time of the Senate longer than will be necessary merely to explain the reasons which induced me to introduce the resolution now under consideration.

It is well known to every Senator present, that the occupation of the Oregon Territory has, for some time past, engaged the attention of the people of the United States generally, but more particularly the people of the Western States. The people of the State which I have the honor, in part, to represent on this floor, has taken a very decided stand in favor of the immediate occupation of the Oregon. If I am not mistaken, the first *public meeting of the people* held to express a formal opinion on this subject, was held in the city of Alton, in that State.* This was followed by several others, in Illinois and the adjoining States. During the last winter, a meeting of more than fifteen hundred persons was held in the State-House at Springfield, composed of members of the Legislature, and others, from every part of the State of Illinois, when this question was most fully discussed, and strong resolutions, expressive of the wish of the people of that State, were passed.† At several of these meetings I had the honor of addressing my fellow-citizens, and giving my views of the propriety of the organization of a Territorial Government west of the mountains, and of taking such steps as would effectually exclude all other Governments from exercising any jurisdiction over the soil admitted by all to be the undoubted property of the United States. During the past summer, the people of the Western States were invited to meet in convention at Cincinnati, in the State of Ohio, for the purpose of taking this subject into consideration, and to adopt such measures as would appear best calculated to secure the rights of this country, and expedite the settlement of the Oregon. A very large portion of the whole Western country was represented in this convention ; a much larger portion than could have been induced to send delegates to a convention on any common or ordinary occasion.

The convention was composed of men of the very first political standing in the West, without regard to party divisions of any kind ; all of both political parties joining most zealously in their endeavors to promote the object for which the convention was called—the immediate occupation of the Oregon. The convention declared, in the most unequivocal terms, that they would “*protest* and continue to protest against any act or negotiations, past, in progress, or hereafter to be perfected, which shall yield possession of any portion of the said Territory to any foreign power,” but more particularly against the possession by Great Britain.

The language of that convention was firm and determined, and I believe it is the opinion of nearly every man west of the Alleghanies.‡

* See Note A, page 8.

† See Note B, page 9.

‡ See Note C, page 18.

The people of the West have not contented themselves with expressing opinions—they have acted. For many years our citizens have gone into the country west of the Rocky Mountains for the purpose of hunting, trapping, and trading with the Indians. They have also more recently gone for the purpose of making permanent settlements. During the last year more than a thousand brave and hardy pioneers set out from Independence, in Missouri, and, overcoming all obstacles, have arrived safe in the Oregon. Thus the first attempt to cross the extensive prairies and high mountains which intervene between the settlements in the States and the Pacific ocean has been completely successful. The prairie wilderness and the snowy mountains, which have heretofore been deemed impassable, which were to constitute, in the opinion of some, an impenetrable barrier to the further progress of emigration to the West, is already overcome. The same bold and daring spirits, whose intrepidity has heretofore overcome the Western wilderness in the midst of dangers, can never be checked in their march to the shores of the Pacific. During the next summer I believe thousands will follow. Extensive preparations are now making for a general move towards that country. The complete success of those who have first gone will encourage others; and as the road is now marked out, I do not think I am at all extravagant when I suppose that ten thousand emigrants will go to Oregon next summer. In the meantime, what course shall the Government pursue?

The indications of public opinion thus everywhere expressed, and the apparent determination to emigrate, I am sure cannot be disregarded by this Senate. For one, I am sure that I cannot discharge the duty I owe to my constituents without using every exertion in my power to effect the object they have so much at heart. I cannot compromise, I cannot yield any part of the Oregon Territory. I cannot agree to wait for negotiations. I cannot agree that there is sufficient doubt as to our title to admit that it is a subject proper for serious dispute.

The joint occupation of the country never ought to have been a subject of negotiation. Our Government committed a great error, in my opinion, when the treaty of 1818 was made; and a still greater error when that treaty was indefinitely prolonged. It is, however, not beyond a remedy. The treaty was made on the supposition that it might become necessary to abrogate that part providing for a joint occupation, and a plain and easy mode was pointed out in the treaty itself. This was for either party to give notice of a desire to abrogate that part of the treaty. This, sir, is the object of the resolution which I have had the honor to introduce.

This thing of a joint occupation of a country, and of a joint jurisdiction by two independent Governments, is an anomaly in the history of the world. I do not now remember anything like it, either among ancient or modern Governments. I have no doubt that it has often happened that two nations may have been at the same time in possession of the same country; but I think that in all such cases they have both contended for exclusive jurisdiction, and the joint possession has generally been hostile, and one or the other has been compelled by force to yield. I remember that there was once a joint and concurrent jurisdiction over a strip of country between Kentucky and Tennessee; I am not sure that there ever was in that case an *agreement* for the joint occupation; I am inclined to think there never was an agreement, but that both States claimed and

exercised jurisdiction over the country until the question was settled about the year 1819. The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. CRITTENDEN] will no doubt remember this dispute. I think he was probably one of the negotiators of the ultimate settlement of the line between the two States.

The joint occupation which I have just mentioned was on several occasions near producing great difficulties, even when both States belonged to one General Government, and when the people of both States were friends and neighbors, and possessed of the highest degree of prudence and forbearance. The difficulties between the States of Ohio and Michigan, and that still more recent between the State of Missouri and Territory of Iowa, will show how tenacious Governments always are in relation to boundaries. These difficulties happened between States, when it would seem really to be a matter of no great consequence whether the disputed territory belonged to the one or the other, as both belonged to one common country. It is a matter of more serious consequence when the disputed territory lies between two rival powers, having no common umpire to determine the dispute. Nations generally adhere with greater pertinacity to a claim of territory than to any other species of right, and yield it with greater reluctance; scarcely ever without appealing to the only umpire between nations—the trial by battle.

I believe, sir, that the recent surrender of a part of the State of Maine to the British Government is probably the only instance recorded in history where a great and powerful nation, with a full and complete conviction of its right to the soil, has tamely surrendered a part of its domain from fear of war. That was a question of limits; this also is a question of limits. We have surrendered a part of the State of Maine; shall we also surrender a part of the Oregon?

It was after the treaty of 1842, that we of the West began to have doubts as to the propriety of treating on this subject. It was after this that we began to doubt the efficacy of negotiations to maintain our rights; and for this reason we have passed the strong resolutions which have been passed in the West, expressing a determination not to abide by any treaty that shall surrender any part of the Oregon. Our people will go there, and they will not submit to British domination. If the Government here will not protect them, they will protect themselves; and all the power of England will never be able to dislodge, from the mountain-fastnesses of the Columbia river, the hardy Western riflemen, who will in a few years occupy that delightful country.

I will not, Mr. President, add any thing more to what I have said; I am not certain that there will be any serious opposition to the adoption of the resolution. I hope most sincerely that there may be none. I believe that a similar resolution will be adopted in the House of Representatives. The President cannot disregard these expressions of the will of the Nation. The notice will be given; in twelve months we will be free from any treaty stipulations; we can then extend our laws and Government over our people who have gone and will go there; and, in a few years, you will see what is now a wilderness, the most delightful residence of man.

[NOTE A.]

OREGON—PUBLIC MEETING.

In pursuance of a public notice previously given, a meeting of the citizens of Alton was held at the Court Room, on Tuesday evening, November 8, 1842, for the purpose of taking the occupancy of the Oregon Territory into consideration. Colonel N. BUCKMASTER was called to the chair, and J. E. STARR was chosen Secretary.

General J. SEMPLE made a motion to appoint a committee to draft resolutions expressive of the sense of this meeting; which motion was approved; and said committee was ordered to consist of General J. Semple, Mr. Jesse Reeder, Mr. S. W. Robbins, and Mr. S. S. Brooks. The committee having retired, returned and presented the following:

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this meeting, the occupation of the Oregon Territory is of vast importance to the whole Union, but more especially to the Western States.

Resolved, That we will, by every means in our power, encourage emigration to that country, and use our influence with our Delegation in Congress to have it occupied by the Government of the United States.

Resolved, That we will never give our consent to surrender any part of that Territory lying between the Russian and Mexican boundaries, to any Nation, for any consideration whatever.

Resolved, That this sentiment should be expressed before any further negotiation takes place, so as to prevent any steps being taken that will for a moment weaken the claim which we have to that *whole* country. With this view, we invite the attention of the people of the United States, the Legislatures of the several States, and especially those of the States of Missouri and Arkansas, and the Territory of Iowa, whose boundaries approach more near than any others to the Oregon Territory, and whose frontiers are more immediately exposed to any depredations which the Indians may be induced to commit.

Resolved, That we view the conclusion of a Treaty with England, without settling our western boundary, as wholly overlooking the Western interests, while a finer opportunity than will, in all probability, ever again be offered, presented itself, to require and obtain a complete relinquishment of all the British claim to the Territory in dispute.

The object of the resolutions having been commented upon and explained, they were unanimously adopted.

A motion that the proceedings of this meeting be signed by the Chairman and Secretary, and published in the city papers, was approved.

Motion to adjourn prevailed.

N. BUCKMASTER, *Chairman.*

J. E. STARR, *Secretary.*

Upon presenting the Resolutions, Mr. SEMPLE offered the following remarks:

He was in favor of the resolutions. He was glad to see a movement made among the people, on the subject of the occupation of the Oregon. We were much indebted to the patriotic exertions of several members of Congress, in relation to this matter; and probably to none more than to his much esteemed personal friend Dr. Linn, of Missouri. He said that he had been, for the last four or five years, placed in a situation where it became his duty, as well as inclination, to study the commercial interest of the United States. He had, during that time, made himself acquainted with the importance to us of the vast trade of the Pacific ocean, and of the immense wealth that would flow into our country by means of the occupation of the Oregon Territory. The rich furs of the Northwest were alone a source of great wealth. Add to this the tropical productions of the western coast of Mexico and central America, the pearls and gold of Panama and Choco, the inexhaustible mineral and other productions of Peru and Chili, on the western coast of South America, which would be brought within our limits through the Oregon. All these would only be a part of the wealth to be gained by having a population and sea-ports on the Pacific. The great trade of the East Indies, which has been for so many years of such great importance to every commercial nation, would be brought within a short distance of our borders. It is not very probable that East India goods will ever be carried by land from the Oregon to New York or Boston. It will probably be always cheaper for those cities to import them by sea around the capes. But we, in the centre of the Continent, are very differently situated. The difference in the distance to the Pacific and the Atlantic is but trifling. With the same facilities for transportation, we can bring goods from the mouth of the Columbia as cheap as from Boston or New York. We have, then, in our favor a distance of nearly fifteen thousand miles of sea navigation. The beneficial effects of this advantage would soon be felt as far as the banks of the Mississippi and Ohio. But suppose we do not, the future inhabitants of Oregon will reap these advantages. And who will they be? Our friends, relations, and countrymen, who may

emigrate to those delightful regions. Every State that is occupied by our people will add to the general prosperity. They will be neighbors and friends and countrymen. Those who emigrate will be as much at home on the shores of the Pacific as on the banks of the Mississippi. Who is there here that has not come from some other State? He who has left Massachusetts, Virginia, or Georgia, to settle in Illinois, feels himself as much in his own native country as if he had never removed. The same national feeling still exists. He has not expatriated; he has not sworn allegiance to any other Government; he is still in the United States, under the same laws, entitled to the same protection, and proud of the same stars and stripes that waved over the place of his birth. It would be the same with him on the shores of the Pacific. The advantages which have been enumerated would be enjoyed by us, if we choose to go there, and would still be enjoyed by us here in the persons of those who do go. Their happiness would be our happiness; their prosperity would be our prosperity; and their wealth would add to the general wealth and power of the nation.

Mr. SEMPLE said that he regretted exceedingly that the western boundary had not been settled in the late treaty of limits with England. He considered the right of the United States to the whole of Oregon, as far north as the Russian boundary, as clear as the noon-day sun. He thought that the right of the State of Maine to all that she claimed equally as clear. But a foreign nation laid claim to a part of that territory without any shadow of right whatever. Yet, we have seen the special agent of that nation refusing even to discuss the question of right; and proposing, for the sake of *peace*, to divide the country in dispute, and we have seen that proposition agreed to by the Executive and Senate of the United States. Mr. S. said he was as much in favor of *peace* as he thought any citizen of the United States ought to be. But, for himself, he would have preferred *war* before he would have yielded one inch of the territory claimed by the State of Maine. It is possible, before a long time, there will be a proposition, for the sake of *peace*, to divide the Oregon with the British. Will the West ever allow it? God forbid! Mr. Semple said that if ever we were obliged to have war, he wanted to have as many good causes of war, and as many parts of the country interested in it as possible: If we had gone to war about the limits of Maine, we of the West would have been equally interested, and would have been found fighting together. But we have divided the question; we have settled the Maine controversy, and left ours unsettled. Will Maine and Massachusetts now have the same interest in a war for the Oregon, as if their own boundary were at stake? Mr. Semplé here went into an explanation of what he considered to be the foundation of the right of the United States to the whole of the Oregon, as far as the Russian boundary, and the frivolous pretences of the British in laying claim to any part of it. He concluded by hoping that the West would never give up one acre of that country, though war, and repeated wars, might be the consequence of such refusal.

[NOTE B.]

OREGON MEETING.

At a public meeting held on the evening of the 5th of February, 1843, in pursuance of public notice, in the Hall of the House of Representatives, to take into consideration the subject of the settlement and occupation of the Territory of Oregon, the Honorable JESSE B. THOMAS was called to the Chair, and NEWTON CLOUD was appointed Secretary.

On motion of Mr. Trumbull, a committee of nine was appointed to prepare and report resolutions expressive of the sense of the meeting.

The Chair appointed the following gentlemen said committee, viz: Lyman Trumbull, Governor Moore, Major Hackelton, D. L. Gregg, John Dougherty, William H. Davidson, Thompson Campbell, Edward Conner, and Mr. Long.

After some remarks by Judge Semple, Mr. Trumbull, and Mr. Peck, the meeting adjourned until Wednesday evening.

Wednesday evening the meeting was numerously attended.

Mr. TRUMBULL, from the committee appointed on the former evening, reported the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the right of the United States to the whole Oregon Territory is not to be questioned; and under whatever pretence any other nation may lay claim to that country, both the dignity and honor of the United States require that they should at once assert their right, and resist such claim.

Resolved, That the interest and safety of the United States demand that the Federal Government should take immediate and efficient measures for the occupation of the Oregon Territory, and the establishment there of a Territorial Government.

Resolved, That we view with distrust the occupation of any portion of the Oregon Territory

by the subjects of the British Crown, and cannot but believe that the object of Great Britain in establishing military posts in that country, and encouraging her subjects to settle there, is to cause its settlement by a people devoted to her interests, and to afford her a pretence hereafter to claim the country as her own.

Resolved, That the policy of Great Britain in establishing colonies in remote parts of the globe, contiguous to other nations, with a view of extending her own power, and encroaching upon the territory of other Governments, should not be permitted to be brought to bear upon the United States; and that we will never give our consent to a surrender of any part of the Oregon Territory to that or any other power.

Resolved, That the settlement of the Oregon Territory by the citizens of the United States will prove of immense advantage to the commercial interests of the country, by affording harbors for our vessels in the Pacific ocean, and facilitating trade with the East Indies; and will greatly add to the safety, as well as the honor of the Republic.

Resolved, That if the General Government will but assert its rights, and extend its fostering care and protection alike to all citizens wheresoever settled within her limits, the day is not distant when our enterprising and adventurous countrymen, invited by the salubrious climate and fertile soil of the country bordering the Pacific, will extend thither their settlements, and dispense from the western shore of this vast Continent, wealth, commerce, and freedom, to the remotest parts of the earth.

After the reading of the resolutions, the meeting was addressed by Judge *Semple*, Judge *Douglass*, and *U. F. Linder*, in favor of their adoption, and by Mr. *Baker*, in opposition.

The meeting adjourned to meet again on Thursday evening. On that evening the Hall was crowded.

The meeting was addressed at great length by General *Hardin*, in favor of the resolutions.

Mr. *Matheny*, of Springfield, offered a substitute for the resolutions reported by the committee, which was read, and supported by Mr. *Matheny* and Mr. *Baker*.

Mr. *Linder* also addressed the meeting again, in favor of the resolutions of the committee.

The substitute was laid upon the table, and the resolutions of the committee adopted.

The meeting then requested the two papers printed in Springfield to publish the resolutions.

The meeting then adjourned.

JESSE B. THOMAS, *Chairman.*

NEWTON CLOUD, *Secretary.*

SPEECH OF JUDGE SEMPLE.

In this country, where public opinion not only governs the conduct of men in society, but the Government itself; where the President and Congress of the United States look to public sentiment as a proper rule of action, it is a matter of importance to adopt some mode of ascertaining that sentiment, and giving it its due weight in the councils of the nation. I know of no means more effectual than those of public meetings, where the whole body of the people can meet together, and, after full discussion, express in the form of resolutions, the opinions which they entertain.

Entertaining this opinion, I invited the attention of the public to the immediate occupation of the Oregon, at a public meeting of the people at Alton, in the month of November last. I found my expectations fully realized in the unanimous expression of opinion among citizens of all political parties on that subject. That, I believe, was the first public meeting ever called in the United States on the subject of the occupation of the Oregon. The proceedings of that meeting have been noticed and commented on in every part of the United States. This shows the interest that is beginning to be taken by the whole people of the United States on that subject.

This question presents itself to us in many important points of view. One of the objections to the extension of our territory is, that the Government will become unwieldy, and that States situated on the Pacific can never be kept under the Government of the United States, but must become independent. I think this opinion is entirely unfounded. The nature of our Federal and State Government is calculated to extend itself. I am quite willing to admit that one central Government would never be able to make laws to satisfy any great extent of territory; indeed, that now contained in the limits of the United States could never be governed by one and the same Legislature. But while the State Governments are maintained in the proper and constitutional exercise of individual sovereignty, they severally have all the powers necessary to an independent State, in the same manner, to all intents and purposes, as if the State owed no allegiance or obligation to any other on earth. They can make all laws among themselves, that the wishes of the people might dictate, without interfering with any other. This interference a State would have no right to exercise if it did not belong to the Union, and was wholly independent. All such interference among independent nations is prohibited by the general laws of

nations. The powers of the Federal Government are, and ought to be, limited to those matters which concern the whole—powers which no one State would ever desire to possess. If, while the several States were thus exercising the powers of sovereignty, we could suppose, or be assured, that there never would be any difference among them, or that none of them would ever be attacked by foreign powers, there would be no use for a Federal Government. But the sad experience of all nations proves that this it is idle to expect. The transactions now going on before our eyes, where a powerful maritime nation is actually robbing, in the most unjust and cruel manner, a people who never molested or injured them, admonishes us that we must be on our guard against like aggressions. This can only be done by presenting a powerful force, capable of preventing any attack, or of punishing any insult. This can only be done by the united force of all. The greater this power, the more certain will be the security. The more extensive our Union, the more powerful we will be; while one of a thousand States would manage its own affairs as well as if that was the only State on the Continent.

I have long been convinced, that, under our peculiar and happy form of Government, so well adapted to the genius of our people, no extension of territory will ever endanger the Union; but, on the contrary, the tendency of extension will be to strengthen the Union. But suppose the contrary—suppose that extension be, in truth, dangerous; the question arises, how will we avoid the danger? Is extension more dangerous than division? Is it necessary for me at this day to portray the dangers of disunion? Have the glowing pictures drawn by the ablest statesmen and purest patriots been forgotten? Is the question of union or disunion again to be debated? God forbid! What, then, are we to do with those extensive regions west of us? The time has arrived when we must act. If we do not occupy them, others will. Our people will emigrate to those regions. Are we to extend over them our protecting arm, or will we either allow them to add to the power of some ambitious foreign nation, or let them form an independent Government? While none will admit the former, the latter would at once be disunion. It is a people that constitutes a nation, not a territory. Those who will emigrate to Oregon will be our people, possessed of the same ideas of Government; the same industry and enterprise; the same ambition, and the same powers of injuring us, if ever foreign intrigues should (which God forbid) make us enemies. I consider this Union as already dissolved and separated into two parts, by the separation of Texas; and the sooner we go to work to unite that, as one of our States, the sooner will we be able to cure the evils arising from disunion. I am convinced, that, at this moment of time, all the arts and intrigues of which European powers are capable, are at work to make the Texans our enemies. Those powers of intrigue have already triumphed as to all the rest of the States of Spanish America, and we are now suffering under its evil effects. Our interests, as well as our safety, require that we should look well to the effects of an extension of that hostility.

It is true, we have nothing to fear from the weak and puerile States of Spanish America. Have we as little to fear from a State composed of the Saxon race? Can we have any assurance that we will always be able to maintain peace with the Texans without a common Government? Could we not, with the same reason, hope to prevent war between a northern and southern Government divided by the Potomac? Those who suppose so, must suppose against the opinions of the wisest and best of men, as well as against actual experience. I assert, therefore, the seeds of discord are now being sown by our enemies and rivals; and that, if we do not apply a timely remedy, we must come to suffer all that we have ever feared from disunion.

But it may be said that the Oregon is in dispute, and that we must take care how we tread, or we will have war with England. War has no terrors for the people of this country. The time has gone by when this nation shall agree to surrender a solitary just right to avoid war. If we are to surrender a solitary undoubted right through fear of war, the principle is the same as if, through fear of war, we were to surrender our independence. It is an old saying, and a true one, that if we have our hands in the lion's mouth, we should get it out the best way we can. If a nation is weak and defenceless, and unjust and unreasonable demands are made upon it by a powerful nation, I admit that good policy and sound wisdom would justify the weaker nation in making the best terms possible, and even surrendering some of its undoubted rights, to preserve the rest. But is it not shameful, yes, disgraceful, for an American to hold such language? Are we that weak and defenceless people that would hesitate, and offer to give up one right to preserve another? Are we not strong enough to preserve all our rights? I must confess, that when I hear an American talking of surrendering our just rights "for the sake of peace," or, in other words, surrendering them through fear, I feel somewhat indignant. I have never, in the whole course of my life, felt so sensibly any act of our Federal Government as that which surrendered to the British a part of the undoubted territory of the State of Maine. The agreeing to one unjust demand always invites another. There is no stopping place. The encroaching power is encouraged by one concession to demand another, until all is gone. If we are ignorant of the character of that power to which we have lately ceded a part of the State of Maine, it is our own fault; we have sufficient evidence of that grasping people, who will not stop

short of surrounding us with enemies. Mexico is now our enemy, not by nature, but made so by the intrigues of that very people who now border us on the north, and wish to join Mexico on our western frontier.

The same mail which brought to us the treaty ceding part of Maine, brought news, also, of ships sailing to the Pacific with the obvious intention of occupying the Oregon, or, at least, of preventing us from doing so. There never was, in my opinion, a greater mistake than to suppose that concession procures peace: the reverse is the truth. If, when the Barbary powers undertook to commit depredations on our commerce in the Mediterranean sea, we had bought peace by tribute, we would not only have been compelled to pay immense sums from time to time, but even that would not have protected us. We then took a different course. We asserted our rights at the mouth of the cannon, and no nation in the world has ever since carried on commerce in that country with so little interruption.

I will now proceed to state what I consider, not to be the foundation of our *claim*, but the proof of our undoubted *right* to the territory said to be disputed by the British.

The French, Spaniards, Russians, and British, have all laid claim, from time to time, either to the whole or part of the northwest coast of America. Civilized nations have generally admitted the right of discovery, and agreed that any civilized people might justly occupy a country inhabited by savages. Discovery was the foundation of the right or claim of the Spaniards; several of their navigators having sailed along the coast of America, in the Pacific ocean, as far as Cape Mendicino, and, on some occasions, as far as the forty-ninth degree of north latitude. The Spaniards were undoubtedly the first who ever sailed on that coast. There never has been any definite limits set as to how much of any country was acquired by discovery. If the Spaniards sailed along the coast as far as California, which they most unquestionably did, before any other nation or people, they might lay claim to the whole coast.

California was discovered as early as 1534, and Cabrillo sailed as far along the coast as the forty-third degree, as early as 1540; while the first English ship, under the command of Sir Francis Drake, did not visit the northwest coast until 1578—nearly forty years after.

Whatever right the Spaniards may have had was ceded to the United States by the treaty of 1819. We have, then, by purchase, all the right which the Spaniards ever could have had.

The French claim was also founded on discovery. La Salle first discovered the mouth of the Mississippi, and laid claim to all the waters of that river. After the French colonies in Canada had increased, and their trading posts had extended from Quebec to New Orleans, they claimed not only all the waters of the Mississippi, but extended it indefinitely west, to all places not actually occupied by any other civilized nation. This was generally understood to include the Oregon. In support of this idea, that Louisiana extended to the Pacific, I will only at present mention, that this was admitted by England, at least; for by the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, the boundary between Canada and Louisiana on one side; and the Hudson's Bay Company on the other, was fixed to commence on the coast in latitude fifty-eight degrees thirty-one minutes north, thence to run in a southwest direction to latitude forty-nine degrees north, and along that line indefinitely westward. So far, then, as England is concerned, she is prevented from saying that Louisiana was bounded by the waters of the Mississippi. After Canada fell into the hands of the English, Louisiana still remained in possession of the French until it was ceded to Spain in 1762, in whose hands it remained until 1800, when Spain re-ceded it to France; and in 1803, France ceded it to the United States. The words of this cession are: "In extent the same as it now is in the hands of France, as it was in the hands of Spain, and as it formerly was in the hands of France."

All these transfers of Louisiana were without any specific limits. The ultimate purchaser, therefore, had a right to whatever could be shown to be, properly speaking, Louisiana. It is not my intention to enter into a minute statement of these several claims on the part of Spain and France, nor do I consider it at all important, as both these nations have relinquished all their claims to the United States. It is only necessary to mention them as showing the extent of the claim purchased. Mr. Jefferson, that truly sagacious politician, understood the purchase of Louisiana as giving the right as far as the Pacific; for immediately after the negotiation was closed, he sent Messrs. Lewis and Clark to explore those regions, whose visit to the mouth of the Columbia may not only be considered in the light of a discovery of that river, (which had, in part, been discovered by Captain Gray so early as 1787,) but may also be considered as an expedition, in the name of the Government, to take possession of Louisiana, as purchased from the French.

The Russians had made many discoveries, and some settlements, in different places on the coast, which it is unnecessary to notice, because, by the treaty of St. Petersburgh, that power relinquished to the United States all right whatever to all that part of the coast south of fifty-four degrees forty minutes north latitude. So that the only nation now claiming, against the United States, any part of that coast between forty-two and fifty-four degrees forty minutes north, is Great Britain.

Independent of the fact that both Spain and France had better claims than England, both of which claims have been transferred to the United States, and independent of the fact that the coast, as well as the interior of the country, were discovered by Captain Gray, and by Lewis and Clark, citizens of the United States, and that England has recognised our right by the surrender of Astoria, after the last war; there is one point of view in which, so far as regards England, we have an undoubted right: By the grant to Virginia, by Charles I., 1609, the King of England made the limits of Virginia to extend from Old Point Comfort two hundred miles northward, and two hundred miles southward, along the sea-coast, and all the land up into the interior, west and northwest, from sea to sea.

By the foregoing grant, the southern line of Virginia would extend on or near the thirty-fourth degree of latitude from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and the northern line would run across the States of Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and include a great part of Upper Canada. This extensive grant to Virginia was afterwards curtailed by several other grants to different persons, and the limits of Virginia were cut down to its present form, as far as related to the lines east of the Alleghany Mountains; but no subsequent grant or claim of any other colony ever interfered with the claims of Virginia to her possessions west of those mountains. The treaty of peace with England, in 1783, further curtailed her limits, so as to cut off all that part which laid west and north of the lakes, and the forty-ninth degree of latitude, west of the Lake of the Woods, as far as the Rocky Mountains. The treaty of 1783 was not intended, and could not be construed, to deprive any of the then colonies of the limits to which they were entitled by any previous grant, farther than its terms import.

That part of said treaty of 1783, which undertook to fix boundaries between the United States and the French and Spanish possessions, was wholly void; neither of the contracting parties having any right to fix their lines unless they were parties to the treaty.

Thus, we see Virginia, after the peace of 1783, claiming all the western country included in her grant, as far as the Mississippi; and this was undisputed by any other of the United Colonies, until she ceded all her western lands to the United States. I have said that Virginia did not claim west of the Mississippi; but why did she not? It was not because England had any right whatever to prevent it, but because, until the purchase of Louisiana, in 1803, the claims of Spain and France were considered paramount, as well to Virginia as to England, who granted it to Virginia; and we were not so hardy as to set up the grant of England, who had no title, against Spain and France, who, we had the justice to admit, had a better right. But what do we now see? England has the audacity, at this day, to set up a claim not only against the title of France, whose title was admitted by the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, but against Virginia, to whom it was granted in 1609.

By a subsequent treaty with England, our northern line was fixed on the 49th parallel of latitude, from the Lake of the Woods west, as far as the Rocky Mountains.

This line, it will be seen, stopped short at the Rocky Mountains. It does not pretend to designate the line beyond, either to give it to the British or acknowledge it to the United States. Being entirely silent, the grant to Virginia remained as it was at the time of the grant from England, which was from sea to sea. The acknowledgment of the independence of Virginia gave to her all the territory she then claimed, except so far as Virginia herself agreed to have those limits curtailed. When any nation becomes independent, it becomes so with the right to exercise sovereignty in all the territory claimed, and which it can maintain with arms; and when independence is acknowledged, the same act gives the sovereignty over that territory. Saving the claims of France and Spain, then, Virginia claimed, as against England, all the land from sea to sea; the purchase of Louisiana, therefore, with the cession from Virginia, which was good as against England, the United States became lawfully and of right possessors of all the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific. These limits went south of the present Mexican line, and north of the present Russian line. But as we have already ceded to those countries all north and south of the lines we now claim, we can have no other claim than to that country between the Mexican and Russian boundaries; but to that I think our right is beyond a doubt.

But there is another ground on which I place our right to the Oregon. And if, in taking this ground, I may depart from the idea some may entertain of right, I hope I may not be charged with injustice or even singularity, when they reflect that upon this ground the question will, in all probability, have to be ultimately determined. I allude to the right derived from power. We have the power to take it, and we will have it. It is contiguous to our territory. It suits us. There is a propriety and fitness in the country belonging to the United States, and there is no propriety or fitness in its belonging to the British. There is a great deal of justice and equity in our settlers' laws in this country. When a settler sets himself down on a tract of public land in Illinois, he lays claim to such portions of the adjoining land, as, in the nature of the circumstances which surround him, is better suited for him than any other person; and he maintains this right even against the Government of the United States. If this can be done amongst indi-

vidual citizens, how much more among nations, who never feel themselves bound by the same strict rules of law, when convenience and power both unite to require the doing of the act.

We are not without British authority for this; for when that Government took possession of the Dutch Colony of New Amsterdam, (now New York,) the best reason that was given to the world was, that it lay between the English Colonies of New England and those of Virginia. Nor is this right of power to be in all respects scouted. Every nation has a right to seek its own happiness and safety. If we seek for a lawful cause for resisting the laws of England at the time of our Revolution, we shall find that as, strictly speaking, no resistance of law can be lawful, so the propriety of things (the fact that we could manage our own affairs, in our opinion, better than the Parliament and King of England, and that we could promote our own happiness and safety to a greater degree) gave us an undoubted right to declare independence, and take our station among the independent nations of the earth.

Having shown, as I consider, the right which we have to the country, I will proceed to show the advantages which would result to us from its occupancy. Not only at the present day, but from the earliest ages of the world, the trade of the East Indies has been of great importance to every commercial nation. This trade we could control, to a great extent, by the occupation of the Oregon. From the time that the Portuguese discovered the passage around the Cape of Good Hope, and European nations saw the great wealth flowing into Lisbon, from a monopoly of the trade of the East, every one sought to find some mode of rivalling that enterprising people. The voyage of Columbus to the New World was never, at first, intended to discover a new and wild country, but to discover a passage to the East Indies. When he first landed in America, he supposed he was on the territory of the rich eastern empire, and hence he called the country by the name of India, which subsequently took the name of West Indies, in contradistinction to East Indies. This opinion prevailed for a long time among those who discovered this continent. Finding, ultimately, that the lands which had been discovered formed no part of the East Indies, the next step was to find a passage through the land into the great South seas, or Pacific ocean. It was not until thirty years after the discovery of America that Magellan sailed into the Pacific, through the straits that still bear his name, and went to the East Indies across that new and unknown ocean. He returned to Europe by the Cape of Good Hope; thus circumnavigating the globe in his voyage. Balboa had previously discovered the great Pacific at the Isthmus of Panama. From that time forward the Spaniards, as well as all the commercial nations of Europe, were constantly engaged in endeavoring to find a passage to the East Indies. Even up to this day, after all the habitable parts of this continent have been explored, we find many attempts making to discover a northwest passage, through which ships may sail to the coast of China, and by this means save the great distance around Cape Horn or Cape of Good Hope.

Not only has a passage been for three hundred years diligently sought, but from the time that Balboa first crossed the Isthmus of Panama, in 1513, to the present time, has the attention of the whole commercial world been turned towards the project of cutting a ship-canal across the Isthmus, for the purpose of facilitating trade with the East Indies. The Spaniards long contemplated this great work, but they never commenced it. They, however, for many years, carried on an extensive trade with the East Indies, landing the goods at Panama and Acapulco, transporting them on mules across the country, and thence shipping them to Europe. This trade was found to be very profitable, and continued to increase for many years, until the English, becoming powerful, at sea, sent a fleet into the Pacific, and destroyed both the commerce and the ships in which it was carried on.

Since the independence of Mexico, Guatemala, and Colombia, many projects have been set on foot, and numerous attempts made to complete what has been so long considered of so great importance—a canal across the Isthmus. Several routes have been proposed, and partial surveys made, in order to ascertain the practicability of such a communication, and to select the best route. Three principal ones, and those most generally spoken of are: 1st, across the Isthmus of Panama, in Colombia; 2d, through the Lake of Nicaragua, in Guatemala; and 3d, from the Bay of Tchuantepet through the Rio Huasicualco to the Gulf of Mexico. Humboldt adds two others in his speculations on this subject; the one is through the river Atrato, in the Gulf of Darien, and the other is by a canal connecting the waters of the Missouri with the Columbia river. This last, the most costly, the most circuitous, and passing the widest part of the continent, I verily believe will be the first completed, and that goods will be brought from China, through the Columbia river, before sixteen miles of canal will be cut through the Isthmus of Panama.

Since the United States have grown to such vast commercial importance, the views of European nations have changed, in some degree, as to the benefits which might result to them from a ship-canal across the Isthmus. Before there was any commercial power in America, and the fairest portions of it were divided into European colonies, the shortening of the distance to China and Japan was of great importance, because that nation which could secure the passage, would of

course monopolize the commerce. Now there is a rival in America to all these powers of Europe. That rival is now carrying on the trade to advantage, though situated at a greater distance. The communication by the Isthmus would throw the American traders nearer than Europe. This will require some explanation. As the trade is now carried on, the average distance from all the ports of the United States to the mouth of the Columbia river, by sea, is two thousand miles farther than the average distance from all the ports in Europe to the same point. If the canal could be opened, then the average distance from the ports in the United States would be two thousand miles less, making a difference, in favor of the United States, of four thousand miles of sea navigation.

To prove this, you have only to cast your eyes on a map of the world, and learn the nature of the winds and currents which set constantly westward from the coast of Africa towards the West Indies. In order to avoid these currents and the trade winds, and pass around Cape St. Rogue, on the eastern promontory of South America, every vessel going from the United States must go as far as the Cape Verd Isles, near the coast of Africa, and thence bear south and southwest to Cape Horn. Vessels from Europe make the same islands, and from thence the route is the same.

From the United States to the Cape Verd Isles is about four thousand miles. From Europe to the same point is about two thousand miles. (I speak in round numbers.) The distance from the United States to the Rio Huascalco, in the Gulf of Mexico, is (say) two thousand miles; while from Europe it is four thousand. Thus it will be seen that the difference in favor of the United States is four thousand miles. By the present route, a ship from the United States, going to China or the northwest coast of America, would have to sail two thousand miles farther than would a ship from Europe. By the Isthmus, one from the United States would have to sail two thousand miles less than one from Europe, going to the same point anywhere in the Pacific. This makes it quite plain, that if we can get a communication through the Isthmus, the whole trade of the Pacific would be thrown into the hands of our enterprising merchants. A communication through the interior of this continent, by way of the Columbia and Missouri rivers, would, for some purposes, have the same effect, with only the additional costs of transportation; while for other purposes it possesses an immense advantage over the route by the Isthmus; for, by this way, the vast extent of country all along the route would be thus supplied with the articles of Indian manufacture, &c.

I have said thus much to show the vast importance which has always been attached to the trade of the East Indies. While the whole world has been, for more than three hundred years, laying plans to secure the advantages of that trade, we are now debating whether we will extend our government and laws, our population, our industry, and our enterprise, to a coast within twenty days' sail, by steamboat, to that very land the trade of which has been the theme of all tongues for so many generations!

Is it possible that the people of the United States, and of the Western country in particular, can be contented with a longer delay in the occupation of a country possessing so many advantages? No, sir. This question has only to be agitated among the people, as we are now doing it, and a voice, that must be obeyed in this country, will be sounded through the land, until Congress will be compelled to act. There will be no escape from an immediate occupation of the Oregon Territory.

Some travellers have represented the country as barren and sterile, with a climate damp and sickly, incapable of sustaining a dense population; while others represent it as rich and fertile, with a fine healthy climate, where the winters are so mild as that cattle can keep fat during the winter, on the common grass of the prairies. Now, according to the best information I have been able to obtain, as well from books as from travellers with whom I have conversed, I am satisfied neither statement is correct. You cannot find in Oregon such large districts of uninterrupted rich lands as are found in Illinois. The very nature of a mountainous region forbids such an idea. But there you find rich valleys and plains in some places, surrounded in others by extensive districts of barren and sterile lands, interspersed with rocks and mountains. We find the same thing occurring in the Alleghany Mountains, with probably this difference, that among the Rocky Mountains there are plains and valleys, as well as high ridges, that are sandy and entirely barren, while these occur to a comparatively limited extent among the Alleghanies. The result of this is only, that just so far as the barren and sandy lands extend, that number of acres, and no more, must be deducted from the whole amount of good and arable land in the country. That part of the country which is good, is said by all to be of the finest description. The timber is large, of good quality for every purpose, of improving farms, building houses, or for ship-building. The prairies constitute the finest grazing lands, which continues during the winter, even as far as the latitude we are now in, while the productions of agriculture are, in nearly every respect, the same as in Illinois. The climate is mild, and, what is still more desirable, it is steady. The experience of the present winter here, it appears to me, would make any one desire to change it

either for a colder or a warmer climate. Steady cold would be much preferable to constant changes, such as we have experienced here for the last three months. Strange as it may appear to many, it is notwithstanding true, that on the coast of the Pacific there is a difference of about ten degrees of latitude in the climate, comparing it with this; so that in forty degrees, north latitude, you have the same climate as in thirty degrees on this side of the Rocky Mountains. You will have, therefore, in the Oregon, about such a climate, in point of temperature, as at New Orleans and Natchez; while the high mountains and elevated valleys, together with an entire absence of lakes and swamps, make the country perfectly healthy. Here the sandy deserts come in for their share of advantages. The atmosphere about those sandy plains must be pure and dry; no unhealthy vapor can be sent from them over the adjacent rich lands; but, on the contrary, this circumstance adds to the health and comfort of the inhabitants.

The range of mountains which extend in width from the head waters of the Missouri, Yellow Stone, Platte, and Arkansas rivers, almost to the shores of the Pacific ocean, is but a continuation of the Andes, which run parallel with the Pacific ocean, entirely from Terra del Fuego, through Chili, Peru, Quito, Guatemala, and Mexico, to the Oregon, and become finally lost in the frozen regions of the north. These mountains are, in many respects, the same in character with those of the south; they rise in many places above the line of perpetual snow. The climate varies greatly on the different sides of the same ridge, as well in temperature as in humidity. On one side you will see a fine green and fertile valley; and on the other side of the same ridge you find a dry and barren soil. In the whole extent of the Andes, they rise in ridges, one above another, in rapid succession, from the ocean to the highest part, there forming table-lands and valleys, which are more or less extensive; they all along gradually slope towards the east.

From this conformation, it follows that the rivers which empty into the Pacific are all small, compared with those that head in the same mountains, and empty into the Atlantic or Gulf of Mexico. It is not, therefore, to be expected that river navigation can ever be very extensive west of the Rocky Mountains. The Columbia river is navigable, without interruption, only about one hundred miles from its mouth. The continued falls and rapids would render it very difficult and expensive to make a good river-navigation for any great distance towards its source. These falls, however, affording abundance of water above, would render it altogether easy to make a canal along its banks, rising towards the mountains by means of locks. But while this rapid fall of the waters, from the mountains to the ocean, is opposed to good river-navigation, there is one advantage to be derived from it which will always counterbalance this disadvantage: canals, for the purposes of irrigation, can always be made to flow over the adjacent valleys and mountain sides. In this manner the Peruvian Indians, prior to the discovery of America by Columbus, converted large districts of barren land (in a country where rain never was known to fall) into fertile fields.

I have no doubt but that many of those dry districts of the Oregon, represented as barren for want of rain, could be turned into the most fertile lands by means of irrigation; and this with no great expense. Those dry parts of the country will ultimately be the most agreeable places of residence, and at the same time the most productive. Being dry, the air will be purer and more healthy, while the rains neither prevent labor in the fields, nor interrupt travelling. They will be the most productive because, as there is no rain, the crops will have uninterrupted sun and heat, (as necessary to vegetation as rain,) while from the irrigation there will, at the same time, be afforded abundant moisture at the roots.

The mineral productions of the Oregon are, of course, but little known. Its riches, in this respect, must hereafter be developed. An abundance of rock-salt is found in the mountains, similar, in all respects, to that found in the same ridge of the Andes, in South America. The mineral productions, I have reason to believe, are the same as found in the whole of that ridge of mountains from north to south.

The Province of Sonora, in Mexico, was many years ago the richest gold region in America. The Spaniards found in that Province, as far as thirty-six degrees of north latitude, gold washings, where one man would obtain several thousand dollars by a day's labor. The Baron de Humboldt, in his work on New Spain, affirms the truth of this, and says that the farther north they went, the richer were the gold mines. The wars with the Apache Indians finally drove the Spaniards from those rich mines. I have conversed with several persons who have been among the Apache Indians, and have heard indirectly from others, and all agree in the statement, that both north and south of the Rio Colorado of the west, there are rich gold mines. This rich, oriferous ridge extends to the Lake of Timpanagós, within the limits of the Oregon Territory.

The rivers are full of fish, of the finest quality. The salmon are caught in large quantities, and constitute an extensive article of commerce.

The trade in furs has always been very extensive. I cannot pretend, at this time, to give any very minute account of the amount of this trade, for many years, in succession; but some idea may be formed of the amount by a table which I will read.

Table showing the amount of Furs and Peltries exported from the parts of America, owned or occupied by the British.

SKINS.	AMOUNT IN DOLLARS.
Beaver,	\$793,400
Muskrat,	46,965
Lynx,	11,020
Wolf,	11,890
Bear,	19,250
Fox,	31,910
Mink,	5,645
All other kinds,	2,475
Total,	\$1,017,555

But some have said that the distance to the Oregon is so great that emigration to that country will be impracticable. This is a great mistake. The western part of the State of Missouri is in about sixteen degrees of west longitude from Washington. The mouth of the Umpqua is in about forty-five degrees west. A degree of longitude, in forty degrees north will not vary much from fifty English miles. Thus it will be seen that from the settlements in Missouri to the Pacific ocean is less than fifteen hundred miles on a straight line going west. The Southern pass, as it is called, near the head of the Platte river, will afford a good wagon road to the west of the Rocky Mountains. I will read from a letter, which I believe is authentic, and will show the facilities with which wagons may be driven into the Oregon:

Extract of a letter from Messrs. Smith, Jackson, and Sublette, dated in October, 1829, to the Secretary of War.

"On the 10th of April last (1829) we set out from St. Louis with eighty-one men, all mounted on mules, ten wagons, each drawn by five mules, and two dearborns, each drawn by one mule. Our route was nearly due west to the western limits of the State of Missouri, and thence along the Santa Fe trail about forty miles, from which the course was some degrees north of west, across the waters of the Kanzas, and up the Great Platte river to the Rocky Mountains and the head of Wind river, where it issues from the mountains. This took us until the 16th of July, and was as far as we wanted the wagons to go. Here the wagons could easily have crossed the Rocky Mountains, it being what is called the *Southern pass*, had it been desirable for them to do so. For our support on leaving the Missouri settlements, until we should get into the Buffalo country, we drove twelve head of cattle, besides a milch cow, eight of these only being required for use before we got to the buffaloes. The others went on to the head of Wind river. We began to fall in with the buffaloes on the Platte, about three hundred and fifty miles from the white settlements, and from that time lived on buffaloes, the quantities being infinitely beyond what we needed. On the 4th of August, we set out on the return to St. Louis; all the high points of the mountains then in view, being covered with snow; but the passes and valleys, and all the level country, was green with grass. Our route back was over the same ground, nearly, as in going out, and we arrived in St. Louis on the 10th of October, bringing back the two wagons, (the dearborns being left behind;) four of the oxen and the milch cow were also brought to the settlements in Missouri. Our men were all healthy during the whole time; we suffered nothing by the weather, and had no accident but the death of one man, who was killed by the falling in of a bank of earth. Of the mules, we lost but one; and two horses stolen by the Kanzas Indians. The grass being along the whole route, going and coming, sufficient for the support of the horses and mules. The usual weight in the wagons was about one thousand eight hundred pounds.

"The usual progress of the wagons was about fifteen to twenty miles per day; the country being almost all open, level, and prairie. The chief obstructions were ravines and creeks, the banks of which required cutting down, and for this purpose a few pioneers were sent ahead of the caravan.

"This is the first time that wagons ever went to the Rocky Mountains; and the ease and safety with which it was done, prove the facility of communications overland to the Pacific ocean. The route from the *Southern pass*, where the wagons stopped, to the great falls of the Columbia, being easier and better than on this side of the mountains, with grass enough for horses and mules, but a scarcity of game for the support of men."

I have now detained the meeting longer than I at first intended, and will conclude my remarks, in hopes that I may have the pleasure of hearing the views of others on this subject, as well for as against the occupation of the Oregon, if any shall be found who are opposed to it.

[NOTE C.]

Resolutions, and a Declaration, adopted unanimously by a Convention of Delegates from the States and Territories of the West and Southwest, held in the City of CINCINNATI, on the 3d, 4th, and 5th days of July, 1843.

Resolved, That the right of the United States to the OREGON TERRITORY, from forty-two to fifty-four degrees forty minutes north latitude, is unquestioned, and that it is the imperative duty of the General Government forthwith to extend the laws of the United States over said Territory.

Resolved further, That to encourage emigration to, and the permanent and secure settlement of, said Territory, the Congress of the United States ought to establish a line of forts from the Missouri river to the Pacific ocean; and provide also a sufficient naval force for the protection of the Territory and its citizens.

Resolved, That for the purpose of making known the causes and principles of our action, the following declaration is unanimously adopted, and now signed by the members of this Convention, with instructions to the officers thereof to transmit a copy to the President of the United States, and to each member of Congress, and also to the Executives of the several States, with a request to present them to their respective Legislatures.

DECLARATION OF THE OREGON CONVENTION.

A Declaration of the Citizens of the Mississippi Valley, in Convention assembled, at CINCINNATI, July 5, 1843, for the purpose of adopting such measures as may induce the immediate occupation of the Oregon Territory, by the arms and laws of the United States of North America.

We, the undersigned citizens of the Mississippi Valley, do hereby declare to our fellow-citizens of the whole Republic, that in urging forward measures for the immediate occupation of the Oregon Territory, and the northwest coast of the Pacific, from forty-two to fifty-four degrees forty minutes north latitude, we are but performing a duty to ourselves, to the Republic, to the commercial nations of the world, to posterity, and to the people of Great Britain and Ireland, notwithstanding we believe, to be benefited by the further extension of her empire.

Duty to ourselves requires that we should urge the immediate occupation of Oregon, not only for the increase and extension of the West, but for the security of our peace and safety, perpetually threatened by the savage tribes of the Northwest. That this duty is required of us as due to the whole Republic; all parts of which may not appreciate, as they seem not to have appreciated, the value of the Territory in question, and its political importance to the honor, prosperity, and power of the Union, to say nothing of our commercial interests and naval predominance, threatened as they are with injury or diminution, should the northeast coast of that ocean pass into the possession of a great naval power. That, as an independent member of the great family of Nations, it is due from us to the whole commercial world, that the ports of both coasts of this continent should be held by a liberal Government, able and willing to extend and facilitate that social and commercial intercourse which an all-wise Providence has made necessary for the intellectual improvement, the social happiness, and the moral culture of the human race.

That we owe the entire and absolute occupation of the Oregon to that posterity which, without such occupation by the citizens and free institutions of our great Republic, could not perfect or make available to themselves or to the world the important consideration above set forth.

That, however indignant at the avarice, pride, and ambition of Great Britain, so frequently, lawlessly, and so lately evinced, we yet believe that it is for the benefit of all civilized nations that she should fulfil a legitimate destiny, but that she should be checked in her career of *aggression with impunity, and dominion without right*.

That for the independence and neutrality of the western coasts of the American continents, and the island of the Pacific ocean, it is important that she should be restrained in the further extension of her power on these coasts, and in the middle and eastern portions of that ocean.

That, so far as regards our rights to the Territory in question, we are assured of their perfect integrity, based as they are on discovery and exploration by our own citizens and Government, and on purchase and cession from those powers having the pretence of right to the same.

That beyond these rights so perfectly established, we would feel compelled to retain the whole Territory, in accordance with Mr. Monroe's universally approved declaration of 1823, that the American continents were not thenceforth to be considered subjects for future colonization by any foreign powers.

Influenced by these reasons and considerations, so important to us and the whole Republic, to liberty and justice, and to free Governments, we do subscribe our names to this declaration, with the firm, just, and matured determination never to cease our exertions till its intentions and prin-

opies are perfected, and the North American Republic, whose citizens we are, shall have established its laws, its arms, and its free institutions, from the shores of the Pacific to the Rocky Mountains, throughout the limits above specified.

And we do hereby protest, as we shall continuo to protest, against any act or negotiation, past, in process, or hereafter to be perfected, which shall yield possession of any portion of the same to any foreign power; and above all do we remonstrate against the possession of any part of the northeast coast of the Pacific ocean by the power of Great Britain.

The following resolution was offered and passed:

Resolved, That six Commissioners be appointed by this Convention, whose duty it shall be to urge upon Congress, personally or otherwise, the resolutions and declaration of this Convention; to open a correspondence with the citizens of other States, and endeavor by all means in their power to obtain the favorable action of the National Legislature on a bill for the immediate occupation of our territory on the Pacific, between forty-two and fifty-four degrees forty minutes, north latitude.

Commissioners appointed: Thomas Worthington, W. W. Southgate, William Parry, E. D. Mansfield, S. Medary, and T. McGuire.

RICHARD M. JOHNSON, *President.*

W. W. SOUTHGATE, Kentucky,
SAMUEL MEDARY, Ohio,
W. B. EWING, Iowa Territory,
JOHN KANE, Indiana,

} *Vice Presidents.*

WILLIAM PARRY, *Secretary.*

